

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An interactive TV contextual content surfing method, system and program product enables viewers to surf from one related program to another through hyperlinking. A TV broadcast station receives interactive TV program content generated by creators. The content is categorized by the creator including title, producer, director, type of program (e.g., sports), sub-type of program (e.g., football), director/producer, players/actors, etc. The content is provided to the broadcast station in the MPEG or web-streaming video/audio formats. Program classification categories are delivered to the broadcast station via an Internet connection. A broadcast server equipped with a correspondence table stores a dynamic table of correspondence between TV program categories and TV channel numbers. Hyperlinking information is created by the broadcast server. The hyperlinking information contains a list of channels that broadcast the same nature of programs by referencing the correspondence table. The server broadcasts the hyperlinking information to that list of channels. The broadcast network carries the TV programs and associated classification information in separate channels to the local TV station for retransmission to TV devices including settop boxes. The Internet may serve as one of the channels for providing the program classification information and receiving viewer input.

Alternatively, the broadcast network may send the program information and associated classification information directly to the TV set top box. The set-top box processes the broadcast hyperlinking information and displays it on the TV screen. The set-top box stores program information by categories in classification tables; contents of a TV program guide section; and recorded programs. A viewer interacts with the set-top box to select a category of programs from the Classification tables. The viewer may select a new program to watch or may ask to hyperlink to a new program related to the one being watched. The system may choose or let the viewer

choose among the various ways the program was classified, provided that one or more programs are available. The viewer may then accept the program as chosen, which need involve no explicit viewer interaction.

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